

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 recites a skeleton for a steering wheel rim and a spoke, said skeleton being interrupted in a radial direction between a spoke section and said steering wheel rim to define radial inner and radial outer skeleton parts separated and distanced from each other so that immediate force transmission in a radial direction between said radial inner and radial outer skeleton parts is interrupted. Claim 1 was rejected on U.S. 6,443,030 to Schuler ("Schuler").

In Schuler, the inner leg of rim 21 has a circular shape. Thus, the inner leg of rim 21 is not part of spoke 7, and therefore, the inner leg of rim 21 of Schuler is not the skeleton for the spoke recited in claim 1. Further, as shown in Fig. 2a of Schuler, spoke 7 is attached to rim 21.

In any event, the skeleton for the spoke 7 and rim 21 of Schuler are not interrupted as claimed. Schuler discloses that the inner leg and outer leg of the rim and the spoke skeleton are one piece. Thus, Schuler does not disclose radial inner and radial outer skeleton parts separated and distanced from each other so that immediate force transmission in a radial direction between said radial inner and radial outer skeleton parts is interrupted, as recited in claim 1.

Claim 1 further recites a vibration-decoupling means bridging a distance between said skeleton parts and attaching said skeleton parts to each other, so that forces from one skeleton part are transmitted to the other skeleton part via

said vibration-decoupling means, said vibration-decoupling means acting in all directions and isolating said steering wheel rim in terms of vibrations from at least one section of said spoke. Schuler does not disclose vibration-decoupling means. In Schuler, additional mass 23 does not decouple the legs of rim 21 with respect to vibration. The additional mass 23 is not a vibration-decoupling means as recited in claim 1, but rather is a mass to increase the mass of the steering wheel.

Claims 2-4 depend from claim 1 and are patentable over the cited prior art for the same reasons as claim 1 and for the specific limitation recited therein. Thus, claims 2-4 should be allowable.

Claim 13 has been allowed.

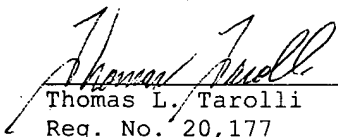
Claim 7 has been rewritten in independent form as claim 14 and has been indicated to be allowable. Claim 14 recites the limitations of claims 1, 4 and 7. It is respectfully submitted that claim 14 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

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Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in
the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account
No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas L. Tarolli
Reg. No. 20,177

TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL,
& TUMMINO L.L.P.
526 Superior Avenue, Suite 1111
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1400
Phone: (216) 621-2234
Fax: (216) 621-4072
Customer No.: 26,294